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**REMARKS BY  
U.S. AMBASSADOR TO BANGLADESH DAN MOZENA  
TEMPEST EXPRESS 22 OR SHETUBANDHAN  
DISASTER RESPONSE PLANNING WORKSHOP  
OPENING CEREMONY  
May 7, 2013**

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Brigadier General Md. Jahngir Kabir Talukder, Director General, Joint Operations, Armed  
Forced Division

Representatives from twenty different nations; participants from Bangladesh civilian and  
uniformed services; participants from international NGOs and donor partners ...

Friends and all who like me believe in preparedness to ensure an effective response to the  
disasters that impact us all.

Asalaam 'malaikum and good morning

I wish first to convey my deepest sympathies to the victims and their families of the  
horrible tragedy at Savar. So many lives lost or broken ... so many families forever devastated  
... a calamity of unspeakable horror. Although planning for this workshop predates the Savar  
tragedy by many months, the incident in Savar underscores the importance of preparedness for  
responding to disasters, both natural and manmade.

Natural disasters ... cyclones, tidal surges, floods ... Bangladesh knows them well ... and  
Bangladesh is prepared to cope with these disasters. When it comes to disaster preparedness,  
Bangladesh surely sets the standard.

The people of Bangladesh, the government of Bangladesh, the civil society of  
Bangladesh ... all know how to handle cyclones, floods, and tidal surges ... death tolls from  
these natural calamities have plummeted in recent years. Bangladesh is rightly proud of this  
track record.

I was not surprised when Bangladesh chose earthquake preparedness as the topic for this,  
the twenty-second multinational Tempest Express exercise. Bangladesh, like America and like

many of the countries represented here today, is challenged by the threat of earthquake. This threat is very real as three fault lines pass through eastern and central Bangladesh, including one near Dhaka. According to one assessment by a Government of Bangladesh agency, more than 70,000 buildings in Dhaka would collapse if Dhaka were hit by a 7.0 magnitude earthquake.

Bangladesh, like each of us in this room, is determined to do everything possible to be prepared should an earthquake ever hit the country.

The sad truth is that we cannot wish away an earthquake; we cannot prevent them from occurring; we cannot make them go someplace else, but we can prepare for them; we can develop the policies, guidelines, standard operating procedures, plans needed to ensure the most effective response possible; we can train first responders and others to ensure the best possible rescue efforts in the first hours and days after an earthquake; we can preposition basic tools, food, water and other supplies to facilitate rescue; we can develop linkages and mechanisms to facilitate international assistance at the time of an earthquake mega-disaster.

You, participants in this exercise from so many different elements of Bangladesh government and civil society, ...

You, participants in this exercise from twenty different countries, ...

You, participants in this room from international multilateral organizations and NGOs, ...

You, all of you, represent one of the greatest gatherings of brain power and experience ever in addressing the challenges of preparing for an earthquake mega-disaster.

This is an unparalleled opportunity for you to show the way to the world on how best to prepare for an earthquake. Your case study will be Bangladesh, but the impact of your work will be global; your results, your findings, your recommendations truly will resonate far and wide as nations the world over tap the conclusions of this exercise to glean new ideas on earthquake preparedness.

Your task, your challenge, your burden is huge. You will work hard and doggedly over the coming days as you chart the course for nations around the world on how best to prepare for earthquakes.

Indeed, the results of this exercise will not be academic, abstract, theoretical treatises on earthquakes ... no ... the results will be concrete, down-to-earth, tangible guidance on how best to respond during the first hours, during the first days after the shaking stops.

I believe this exercise, Tempest Express 22, could create a legacy that will advance earthquake preparedness around the world, that will save thousands if not millions of lives in the future. I am pleased and proud that America in partnership with the Government of Bangladesh is sponsoring this event, which is so critically important that even during times of budgetary cutbacks in the U.S., no one doubts the need for this exercise to continue.

So, as you work long and hard over coming days, as you sweat at your computers, as you press your minds, imaginations to the limit, recall that the work you are doing is real, recall that you are saving lives.

I look forward to returning on May 14 to be briefed on your conclusions. Meanwhile, I wish you every success as you undertake this momentous work.

Thank you.

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*\*As prepared for delivery*